



# Safety Sense

## Water Safety



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### Drowning: It Can Happen in an Instant

Not including boating incidents, on average about 10 people die from drowning every day in the United States, according to *Injury Facts 2016*, the annual statistical report on unintentional injuries produced by NSC.

### Teens and Young Adults Often Don't Think About Safety

When we think of water safety, we often think of the potential for young children to drown. But drowning also is a concern for teens and young adults. While drowning is more common for children 5 and younger, it's the second leading cause of death for people age 5 to 24. According to NSC data, 710 people age 5 to 24 drowned in 2013.



### Swimmers should keep a few safety precautions in mind:

- **Don't go in the water unless you know how to swim**
- Never swim alone
- Learn CPR and rescue techniques
- Make sure the body of water matches your skill level; swimming in a pool is much different than swimming in a lake or river, where more strength is needed to handle currents
- If you do get caught in a current, don't try to fight it; stay calm and float with it, or swim parallel to the shore until you can swim free
- **Never drink alcohol when swimming**; alcohol is involved in about half of all male teen drownings, according to KidsHealth.org

## Hoops Health

Basketball is one of the most popular recreational sports in the armed forces. It's an excellent tool for fitness and fun that can break up the monotony of a physical training program. Probably due to its popularity, basketball is also a leading cause of sports related injuries among service members. According to the U.S. Army Public Health Command, Army survey data show that each year Soldiers suffer more than 50,000 sports injuries requiring medical care. Basketball is consistently a leading injury-producing sport for Soldiers both deployed and at home station. Although they can suffer a variety of injuries playing basketball, the lower extremities — specifically the knee and ankle — are the most commonly affected areas.



- **Warm-up**

The warm-up cannot be overemphasized for any sport and becomes more important if one rarely plays basketball. The warm-up involves practicing the specific movements required in basketball — but at a much slower and controlled pace. Take 10 to 15 minutes to practice techniques such as jumping, landing, cutting, pivoting and handling the ball. These activities prime the muscles and nervous system to keep movements precise and controlled, which will protect ligaments, tendons and joints. Stretching is not the same as a warm-up, but it can be a part of the warm-up.

- **Know Your Limits**

Don't try and play above your skill level. Overconfidence in one's athletic abilities has been the downfall of many recreational basketball players. Don't get sloppy with technique or over exuberant with movements that you may not be accustomed to doing. The "I-used-to-be-able-to-dunk" syndrome is one example. Also, be aware of the skill level of your opponent, who may be much better (or worse) than you.

- **Wear Ankle Braces**

Those with prior ankle sprains are especially vulnerable to a re-injury and should consider wearing an ankle brace while playing basketball.

- **Conclusion**

In addition to its physical fitness benefits, basketball can be a source of stress relief for many Soldiers. But it can also lead to injuries that result in significant lost duty time and a decrease in readiness. Before participating in a pick-up game of basketball, or any other sport, make sure you're properly prepared so your hoop dreams don't turn into a nightmare.



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MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Preserving the Force

From Memorial Day through Labor Day, many of us will face increased exposure to hazards at home and on the job. Warm weather and longer days combine for greater opportunities to travel, play sports, and enjoy recreational activities of every kind. As leaders, we must prepare ourselves and engage our people to ensure we exercise sound judgment and focused leadership to lessen the vulnerability of our uniformed and civilian workforce to unique summertime hazards. One loss is too many. The preservation of our force is a national security imperative.

While the actions you took last year resulted in fewer losses than the year before, we still lost 59 noble warriors to a variety of fatal mishaps, primarily motor vehicle crashes and water-related activities. Therefore, I challenge you to build upon your excellent efforts from last year to continue this downward trend. To safely enjoy an active season this summer, each of us must learn and heed those lessons painfully gleaned from past mishaps. The personal use of known best practices such as proper diet and sleep hygiene, responsible use of alcohol, regular physical exercise, and driving without distraction will help ensure all are prepared to tackle the critical work of defending the Nation. Uniformed and civilian personnel alike must leverage every available tool to prevent injuries as well as the loss of valuable material and equipment.

The opportunity to lead this Department is humbling, and I am truly honored to serve the world's finest military, civilian personnel, and their families. Thank you for your selfless service to the Nation and enjoy a safe and healthy summer season!

*John Matis*